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Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 MC-02 ACDA-19 AID-20 IGA-02 EB-11 /172 R

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY MANILA
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E. O. 11652 N/ A
TAGS: PFOR, XC, US
SUBJECT: APRIL 23 INDOCHINA PRESS SUMMARY

1. (INDOCHINA NEWS RELEGATED TO BACK PAGES BY NYT).
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2. IN TAM SAYS LON NOL AND HIS CHIEF POLITICAL OPPONENTS REACH COMPROMISE FORMULA FOR NEW ALL- PARTY COUNCIL TO RUN CAMBODIA. COUNCIL WOULD COMPRISE THESE TWO, PLUS SIRIK MATAK AND CHENG HENG. FORMULA ALLOWS FOR SUSPENSION

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OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR 3 TO 6 MONTHS, WITH COUNCIL' S AUTHORITY AS DECISION- MAKING BODY WRITTEN INTO CONSTITUTION (REUTER WP, SUN). GREENWAY (WP), IN PP, NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT IN TAM -- " WHO HAS HAD EXPERIENCE WITH LON NOL AGREEING TO ONE THING AND DOING ANOTHER" -- SAYS HE WANTS SOMETHING IN WRITING OR PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT THAT POWER REALLY WILL BE SHARED EQUALLY IN NEW COUNCIL.

3. GREENWAY FINDS THAT MILITARY SITUATION " CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE," WITH FIGHTING 7 MILES SOUTH OF PP. REUTER CITES COMMUNIST GAINS DESPITE INTENSIVE U. S. BOMBING, AND REPORTS CONFIRMATION BY FANK OFFICERS AT SECTOR HEADQUARTERS IN SUBURB OF TAKHMAU THAT LONG STRETCH OF CAPITAL' S DEFENSES IN THEIR AREA IS LIGHTLY PROTECTED (SUN, NYT). SIX U. S. NEWSMEN SUPERFICALLY WOUNDED BY MORTAR SHRAPNEL AS THEY ACCOMPANIED FANK FORCES IN ROAD- SWEEPING OPERATION 11 MILES SOUTH OF PP (AP SUN, WP).

4. NYT DESCRIBES SITUATION AT TAKHMAU AS CALM, WITH FANK GEN. DIEN DEL SIPPING ICED COGNAC WITH FELLOW OFFICERS, SEEMINGLY UNMANNED ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS IN NEARBY ENCAMPMENT DRAWN UP IN CIRCLE, AND SOLDIERS STROLLING RIVER BANK OR RELAXING IN TOWN, IN PP, " AS ARE PACKED WITH EUROPEAN AND WEALTHY CAMBODIAN GIRLS AND DIPLOMATS AND NEWSMEN. " REALLY DETERMINED MILITARY FORCE COULD PUNCH ITS WAY INTO PHNOM PENH FROM ANY DIRECTION AND WITH LITTLE SERIOUS RESISTANCE FROM ANYONE, SAVE, PERHAPS, THE AMERICAN BOMBERS" THAT TURN UP WHEN SITUATION LOOKS THREATENING. BUT ALSO EVIDENT THAT ENEMY IN NO RUSH, AND " PRESUMABLY WAS ALSO BRUSHING FLIES AWAY FROM HIS GENTLY ROCKING HAMMOCK."

5. SOUTHERLAND (CSM), AT PREK YOUN, CONTENDS THAT UNCLASSIFIED

U. S. BOMBING OF SUCH VILLAGES " RAISES EMBARRASING QUESTIONS" FOR U. S. BECAUSE -- " JUST AS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN MANY OTHER CAMBODIAN VILLAGES IN RECENT MONTHS" -- TROOPS WHO ENTERED PREK YOUN " WERE NOT NORTH VIETNAMESE. THEY WERE CAMBODIAN, OR KHMER, INSURGENTS." EVEN ASSUMING THAT ONE UNSTATED AIM OF BOMBING IS TO WEAKEN KHMER INSURGENTS, " PREK YOUN IS AT THE VERY LEAST AN EXAMPLE OF NEEDLESS DAMAGE INFLICTED ON CIVILIANS."

6. NYT' S BROWNE IN PP REPORTS THAT CAMBODIAN PRESS CENSORSHIP IS AT LEAST TACITLY ENCOURAGED BY SOME US OFFICIALS. HARDENED ATTITUDE TOWARD CENSORSHIP REFLECTS IN PART ANGER OF CAMBODIAN OFFICIALS OVER TONE OF RECENT REPORTING. MANY CORRESPONDENTS NOW

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CONCEDE THAT DANGER OF PP COLLAPSING IN LAST FEW WEEKS HAS BEEN OVERSTATED. SOME US OFFICIALS SHARE CAMBODIAN ANGER. CITES AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO ONE INDOCHINA COUNTRY AS HAVING SAID, " THOSE LITTLE BASTARDS OF THE PRESS ARE AS BAD AS THE LITTLE BASTARDS ON THE HILL." REPORTS UPI' S SYLVANA FOA' S CHARGE THAT SENIOR US DIPLOMAT ENCOURAGED CAMBODIAN OFFICIALS TO EXPEL HER, AND WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT, AMBASSADOR SWANK, WHO " RUNS A TIGHT SHIP," SAID THROUGH SPOKESMAN THAT IT WAS NOT INCUMBENT ON HIM TO REPLY TO LETTER ASKING FOR COMMENT. MANY US OFFICIALS REMAIN ON FRIENDLY PERSONAL TERMS WITH NEWSMEN HERE AS ELSEWHERE IN INDOCHINA, BUT THEY RISK CENSURE OR DISCIPLINARY ACTION IF THEIR CONTACTS RESULT IN TOO MANY PUBLIC DISCLOSURES. MOST OFFICIALS FEEL THAT ATTITUDES TOWARD PRESS ARE MAINLY DICTATED BY WASHINGTON.

7. ARVN INFANTRY AND ARMOR FIGHT OFF ATTACKS NEAR BORDER ASSEMBLY AREAS FOR VITAL MEKONG CONVOYS TO PP, KILLING 35 COMMUNISTS, ARVN REPORTS (AP, NYT, NYDN, SUN, WP). TWELVE DIE IN THEATER BLAST AT PHUOC THIEN; GVN BLAMES COMMUNIST TERRORISTS (REUTER, SUN).

8. OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB PRESIDENT' S AWARD, WILL GO TO AMERICAN COMMITTEE TO FREE JOURNALISTS HELD IN SEASIA, TO SPUR SEARCH FOR 20 MISSING NEWSMEN (NYT).
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9. POPE PAUL VI, IN EASTER MESSAGE, DEPARTS FROM CUSTOM, NAMING INDOCHINA AS ONE PLACE WHERE HOPES FOR END TO STRIFE ARE " STILL EXPOSED TO THE ROUGH WINDS OF AN UNCERTAIN SITUATION" (WP, NYT).

10. IN BOOK, " MY WAR WITH THE CIA," PUBLISHED THIS MONTH, SIHANOUK VOWS HE WILL NEVER NEGOTIATE OR COMPROMISE WITH LON NOL GOVERNMENT; " THEY WILL BE WIPED OUT AND, IF ANY OF THE RINGLEADERS FALL INTO OUR HANDS, THEY WILL INEVITABLY BE EXECUTED." SIHANOUK BLAMES U. S. INTER-VENTION -- PARTICULARLY CIA -- FOR INSTIGATING COUP THAT OUSTED HIM (UPI, PHINQ).

11. WP AGREES WITH WHAT APPEARS PRESIDENT' S VIEW I. E., THAT CEASE- FIRE AGREEMENT IS NOT " OF A PIECE," CONTRARY TO DECLARATION OF SOME ADMINISTRATION TYPES WHO SAY THAT JANUARY AGREEMENT MUST BE FULLY " CARRIED OUT" AND THAT US WILL NOT ABIDE BY OTHER SIDE' S SELECTIVE FULFILLMENT OF IT. BY PAST AMERICAN SACRIFICES, BY CONTINUING AID, BY READYING SAIGON TO FIGHT ITS OWN BATTLES, BY USING LEVERAGE IN MOSCOW AND PEKING, PRESIDENT HAS FULLY SATISFIED HIS AIM OF ASSURING SVN REASONABLE CHANCE TO MAKE IT ON ITS OWN.

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12. EVANS AND NOVAK (WP) IN TAN CHAU (CHAU DOC PROVINCE) REPORT THAT DELTA REGION, WHICH USUALLY ESCAPED WAR' S HEAVIEST FIGHTING, HAS BECOME TARGET OF COMMUNIST MILITARY OPERATIONS AIMED AT CONTROLLING MORE LAND, CAPTURING ENTRY POINTS INTO SVN, AND SECURING CAMBODIAN SANCTUARY FOR NVA. NOTE ALSO THAT NVA HAVE INFILTRATED INTO BAC LIEU PROVINCE, PARTLY TO SEEK CONTROL OF ITS EASTERN- MOST DISTRICT BUT ALSO IN QUEST OF TWO POSSIBLE SEACOAST ENTRY POINTS.

13. ANTHONY LEWIS IN LONDON SAYS OF CAMBODIA BOMBING THAT " ONCE AGAIN THE UNITED STATES HAS COMMITTED ITS POWER AND PRESTIGE TO A COUNTRY OF THE MOST MARGINAL INTEREST TO US." SEES TWO BASIC REASONS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN CAMBODIA: CONCERN OVER IMPACT ON SAIGON IF CAMBODIA FALLS ENTIRELY TO COMMUNIST OR COMMUNIST- LEANING FORCES;
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AND PRESIDENT' S FEELING THAT HIS OWN REPUTATION IS AT STAKE.

14. CSM EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR UNICEF PROGRAMS - PAST AND PROJECTED - FOR ALL INDOCHINA. PORTER

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